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| 10/632,701 | 07/31/2003 | David Wong | 13914-028001 / 2003P00198 | 3616 |
| 32864 | 7590 | 05/25/2005 | EXAMINER | |
| FISH & RICHARDSON, P.C. PO BOX 1022 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55440-1022 | | | KYLE, CHARLES R | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 3624 | |

DATE MAILED: 05/25/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

Rejections of Claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 of the prior office action are withdrawn based on Applicant's amendments.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 12-21, 23-24, 27-32 and 34- 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US 6,356,909 *Spencer*.

With respect to Claim 1, *Spencer* discloses the invention as claimed including in a computer-implemented method the steps of:

receiving user input to generate an opportunity representing a desired commercial transaction, the user input including opportunity data associated with the desired commercial transaction (Figs. 2, 13, 14; Col. 8, lines 5-38);

receiving user input to associate a particular compliance rule with the opportunity, the user input specifying a particular response attribute of a plurality of response attributes to be

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evaluated according to the particular compliance rule, the user input further specifying the particular compliance rule of a plurality of pre-defined compliance rules (Fig. 15; Col. 8, lines 22-38; Col. 12, lines 28-39);

generating the opportunity using a computer-implemented bidding tool, wherein the opportunity includes the opportunity data, and wherein generating the opportunity comprises associating the particular compliance rule with the opportunity (Figs. 4, 21A; Col. 11, lines 3-35; Col. 12, lines 28-38; Col. 13, lines 19-44);

electronically communicating the opportunity to a potential supplier (Fig. 16; Col. 4, lines 40-49; Col. 8, lines 38-51);

electronically receiving a response from the potential supplier, the response including response attribute data for the particular response attribute (Fig. 21B; Col. 4, lines 49-52; Col. 9, lines 13-15); and

using a computer-implemented rules engine, evaluating the response attribute data for the particular response attribute using the particular compliance rule (Col. 3, lines 44-54; Col. 15, line 55 to Col. 16, line 5).

With respect to Claims 2 and 4, *Spencer* discloses weighting of responses (an action) at Col. 3, lines 38-43, Col. 4, lines 7-12 and Col. 13, lines 11-18.

As to Claim 3, *Spencer* discloses flagging a response at Col. 16, lines 8-10.

With respect to Claim 5, *Spencer* discloses discarding a response at Col. 16, lines 10-15.

With respect to Claims 6 and 8, *Spencer* discloses a discard rule at Col. 16, lines 1-15; this is read as a processing rule.

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As to Claim 9, *Spencer* discloses winner determination at Col. 16, lines 50-51.

With respect to Claim 12, *Spencer* discloses the invention as claimed including in a method the steps of:

receiving user input specifying a particular response attribute of a plurality of response attributes to evaluate using a compliance rule (Fig. 15; Col. 8, lines 22-38; Col. 12, lines 28-39);

receiving user input specifying a particular compliance rule of a plurality of pre-defined compliance rules to evaluate attribute data for the particular response attribute (Fig. 15; Col. 8, lines 22-38; Col. 12, lines 28-39); and

receiving user input specifying an action to take based on evaluating the attribute data using the particular compliance rule (Col. 3, lines 38-43, Col. 4, lines 7-12 and Col. 13, lines 11-18).

See also the discussion of Claims 1 and 2.

With respect to Claim 13, *Spencer* discloses user input to associate a compliance rule with a later-created opportunity at Col. 8, lines 5-38. Here, questions are stored in the questions database for association with later-created RFPs.

With respect to Claim 14, *Spencer* disclose automatic determination of whether to associate a compliance rule with a later-created RFP at Col. 10, lines 58-65, in that editing of an existing RFP automatically specifies compliance rules (questions) with a new RFP (opportunity).

With respect to Claim 15, see the discussion of Claims 1 and 12.

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With respect to Claims 16 and 27, they are the article and system variations of Claim 1 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 17 and 28, they are the article and system forms of Claim 2 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 18 and 29, they are the article and system forms of Claim 3 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claim 19, it is the article form of Claims 4 and is rejected in a like manner.

With respect to Claims 20 and 31, they are the article and system forms of Claim 5 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 21 and 32, they are the article and system forms of Claim 6 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 23 and 34, they are the article and system forms of Claim 8 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 24 and 35, they are the article and system forms of Claim 9 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claim 30, it is the system form of Claim 4 and is rejected in a like manner.

Claims 7, 22 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 2004/0083156 A1 *Spencer* in view of US 2002/0165814 A1 *Lee et al.*

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Regarding Claim 7, see the discussion of Claim 4. *Spencer* does not specifically disclose a weighting rule for assigning weights to a response. *Lee* discloses this limitation at paras. 31-35. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Spencer* with the weighting rules for attributes of *Lee* because this would result in improved ranking of alternative responses.

With respect to Claim 22, they are and 7 and are rejected in a like manner.

With respect to Claim 33, it is the system form of claim 7 and is rejected in a like manner.

Claims 10-11, 25-26 and 36-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 2004/0083156 A1 *Spencer* in view of US 2003/0208424 A1 *Tenorio et al.*

With respect to Claim 10, see the discussion of Claim 1. *Spencer* does not specifically disclose evaluation based where the attribute is supplier identification. *Tenorio* discloses this limitation in a trading environment at para. 21. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Spencer* to include the supplier identification evaluation of *Tenorio* because this would allow buyers to receive responses from appropriate suppliers, such as those of a particular geographic area. See *Tenorio* at para. 21, lines 1-8.

With respect to Claim 11, see the discussions of Claims 4 and 10. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify *Spencer* with weighted supplier identification because this would result in improved ranking of qualified supplier responses.

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With respect to Claims 25 and 36, they are the article and system forms of Claim 10 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

With respect to Claims 26 and 37, they are the article and system forms of Claim 11 respectively and are rejected in a like way.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant has asserted that there was common ownership of this application and the *Schulze* reference. While this issue is not currently relevant, given the citation of new art for rejection, the Examiner notes that records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office show no such common ownership.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a).

Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37

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CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Charles R Kyle whose telephone number is (571) 272-6746. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:00-2:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent A Millin can be reached on (571) 272-6747. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

crk
May 13, 2005

Examiner Charles Kyle

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles Kyle", with a stylized flourish at the end.